

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1-4. (Cancelled)

5. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for making a floorboard comprising:

a conveyor belt;

an assembly area located at a first portion on the conveyor belt for receiving elongated strips of wood and for assembling said strips of wood end to end and side by side in rows to form a floorboard, said wood strips being longitudinally interconnected with each other with a finger joint;

a press located at a second portion on the conveyor belt defining a curing area for making a cured floorboard, downstream from said assembly area, for receiving said floorboard, said press being provided with a heater, with lateral pressure means for exerting lateral pressure on said floorboard, with a plate movable between a retracted position and a pressing position and with a stop for stopping a leading end of the floorboard;

means for applying longitudinal pressure on said elongated strips of wood when said floorboard is in said press; wherein said means for applying longitudinal pressure comprises a multi-finger joint pressing machine located at the entrance of the curing area, said multi-finger joint pressing machine including a transversal support bar being movable between a retracted position and an operative position, said support bar being provided with a plurality of teeth extending under the support bar and longitudinally towards the output area, wherein when said support bar is in said retracted position, said floorboard can be conveyed into said curing area, and when said support bar is in said operative position, said fingers engage a top portion of said floorboard in order to apply downward and longitudinal pressure to said wood strips and thereby force said finger joints to close;

holding means;

an output area located ~~at a third portion on the conveyor belt~~, downstream from said curing area, for receiving said cured floorboard, said output area being provided with a holder for holding a portion of said floorboard extending beyond said press; and

a controller for controlling operation of said apparatus wherein when said floorboard has been assembled in said assembly area, said controller activates said conveyor to place a leading edge of said floorboard in said press, then activating a curing cycle by said controller subsequently placing said multi-finger jointing machine in said operative position and placing said press in said pressing position in order to cure said floorboard, said controller placing said multi-finger jointing machine in said retracted position and placing said press in said retracted position, said controller activating said conveyor to convey said cured floorboard to said output area and repeating said curing cycle for another portion of said floorboard.

6. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 5, wherein said means for applying longitudinal pressure ~~are being~~ a multi-finger joint pressing machine located at the entrance of the curing area, said multi-finger joint pressing machine including a transversal support bar being movable between a retracted position and an operative position, said support bar being provided with a plurality of ~~fingers~~ teeth extending under the support bar and longitudinally towards the output area, whereby when said support bar is in said retracted position, said floorboard can be conveyed into said curing area, and when said support bar is in said operative position, said fingers engage a top portion of said floorboard in order to apply downward and longitudinal pressure to said wood strips and thereby force said finger joints to close.

7. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 6 5, wherein said support bar is provided with at least one ~~finger~~ tooth for each row of wood strips.

8. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 7, wherein said multi-finger joint pressing machine applies an individual pressure to each row of wood strips of at least 100 pounds.

9. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 6 5, wherein each finger tooth of said plurality of fingers teeth is provided with an absorber.

10. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 9, wherein said absorber is a spring.

11. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 6 5, wherein each finger tooth of said plurality of fingers teeth is made of metal.

12. (Cancelled)